

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS***Status of Claims***

Claims 9-15 have been canceled.

New claims 16-27 have been added.

Thus, claims 1-8 and 16-27 are pending in the application.

Applicants hereby request further examination and reconsideration of the presently claimed application.

Response to Restriction Requirement

Applicants elect the invention of Group I and respectfully traverse the Examiner's assertion that *Faur* (US 6,080,683) destroys the unity of invention between groups I and II. For example, the Examiner asserts that *Faur* discloses regenerating the active solution at col. 3, lines 6-7 and claim 2. However, these portions of *Faur* only disclose creating a saturated solution – “[t]he basic solution (BS) can be saturated with SiO₂-containing sources such as silica gel.” The basic solution is simply the starting solution, and there is no discussion that the starting solution is further regenerated during the process of growing a silicon oxide layer on a substrate. Thus, *Faur* does not establish a *prima facie* case of anticipation or obviousness to the pending claims sufficient to destroy unity of invention.

Nonetheless, in an effort to substantively advance prosecution, Applicants have canceled claims 9-15 of Group II, and have added new claims 16-27 further defining aspects of the method of Group I.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully look forward to the Examiner's substantive action on these claims. If the Examiner believes it would assist in expediting the application, Applicants welcome a telephone conference with the Examiner to improve understanding of and resolve any questions or issues of the Examiner.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee connected with this communication to Deposit Account No. 50-1515, Conley Rose, P.C.

Respectfully submitted,

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